

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15  
ICA-11 AID-05 /074 W  
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R 231410Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9113  
INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 7785

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, NI, SHUM  
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE CA ADJOURNMENT

1. THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA) REMAINS IN  
RECESS WITH NO CLEAR INDICATION AS TO WHEN IT  
WILL BE RECONVENED OR DISSOLVED. THE GENERAL  
FEELING HERE REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT THE  
ASSEMBLY WILL BE RECALLED FOR A CEREMONIAL  
CONCLUSION BUT NOT FOR FURTHER DELIBERATIONS.

2. THE ONLY PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE CA'S  
ADJOURNMENT FROM THE FMG HAS CAME FROM HEAD OF  
STATE OBASANJO WHO IN THE COURSE OF A VISIT TO  
ANAMBRA STATE REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IN HIS  
VIEW, THE ASSEMBLY WAS STILL IN SESSION. HE  
SAID THAT HE COULD NOT JUDGE ITS WORK UNTIL  
HE RECEIVED THE ASSEMBLY'S REPORT. REJECTING  
THE DEMAND BY NSUKKA SUTDENTS THAT THE MCAS  
BE BANNED FROM POLITICS FOR TEN YEARS BECAUSE  
OF THEIR SELFISH ACTIONS, OBASANJO REPLIED  
PHILOSOPHICALLY THAT THE NIGERIAN SYSTEM IS  
COMPLEX AND IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO EXPECT 230  
PEOPLE TO FASHION A CONSTITUTION WHICH WOULD PRO-  
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VIDE SMOOTH SAILING. (PUNCH, ON JUNE 17, QUOTED  
OBASANJO AS HAVING SAID THAT THE RCAS SHOWED  
"MORE ACUMEN IN COLLECTING FAT REMUNERATIONS,  
MATB  
BUSINESS CONTACTS AND POSING FOR PRESS  
PHOTOGRAPHERS THAN ENGAGING THEMSELVES DILIGENTLY  
IN REAL BUSINESS." THE PUNCH QUOTE WAS

HAILED BY SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS EDITORIALY UNTIL  
IT WAS WITHDRAWN BY PYNICH ON JUNE 19 AND REATTRIBUTED  
TO AN NSUKKA STUDENT LEADER.)

3. THE DAILY TIMES (DT) ENDED ITS SILENCE ON THE  
ASSEMBLY'S ADJOURNMENT WITH A JUNE 17 EDITORIAL  
WHICH RECOMMENDED THAT THE ASSEMBLY BE RECONVENED  
FOR A CEREMONIAL CONCLUSION BUT NOT TO CONSIDER  
SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES. THE DT NOTED: "THIS NEWS-  
PAPER BELIEVES THAT THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE  
SECOND NIGERIAN REPUBLIC SHOULD HAVE THE SATIS-  
FACTION THAT THEY HAD UTILIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
GIVE THE COUNTRY THE BEST CONSTITUTION THEY COULD.  
IT IS WISE, THEREFORE, THAT THE CONSTITUENT  
ASSEMBLY SHOULD RECONVENE IN ORDER TO TIDY UP  
WHATEVER LOOSE ENDS REMAIN IN THEIR WORK AS A  
SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERS THINK."

4. THE EDITORIAL CONTINUED, HOWEVER; "THE DAILY  
TIMES BELIEVES THAT MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY SHOULD  
APPRECIATE THE ESSENTIAL PURPOSE OF THEIR  
RECONVENING. IT IS NOT TO GIVE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY  
TO OPEN UP DISCUSSION ON MATTERS THAT ARE CLEARLY  
OUTSIDE THE COMPETENCE OF THE ASSEMBLY, SUCH AS  
THE ATTEMPT BY SOME MEMBERS TO CREATE NEW STATES.  
NEITHER IS IT AN OCCASION FOR MEMBERS TO VENTILATE  
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THEIR PET GRIEVANCES AND GENERALLY SET BACK THE  
HANDS OF THE CLOGD REGARDING THE DECISIONS  
WHICH THE ASSEMBLY HAS ALREADY TAKEN."

5. THE DT CONCLUDED: "IT BRINGS TO LIFE THE  
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSTITUENT  
ASSEMBLY'S WORK IF MEMBERS' DELIBERATIONS ARE  
CONCLUDED FORMALLY, WITH A JUDICIOUS AMOUNT OF  
CEREMONY, POMP AND PAGEANTRY. THE OCCASION  
DEMANDS AND DESERVES ALL THESE. IN SUBSEQUENT  
GENERATIONS, MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ORDINARY  
NIGERIANS CAN TRUTHFULLY ASSERT THAT, WITHIN THE  
LIMITS OF OUR WISDOM, WE STARTED THE SECOND  
REPUBLIC WITH THE BEST CONSTITUTION OUR COLLECTIVE  
ENDEAVORS COULD DEVISE."

6. COMMENT: WE HAVE HEARD SOME SPECULATION  
RECENTLY FROM MCAS THAT UDOMA IN FACT DID ADJOURN  
THE CA ON HIS OWN VOLITION WITHOUT CONSULTING THE  
FMG. IF SO, WE CAN ONLY IMAGINE WHAT OBASANJO'S  
REACTION WAS WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS UPON HIS  
RETURN FROM POLAND AND ROMANIA.SPECULATION

ABOUT UDOMA'S ROLE ON JUNE 5 IS MADE ALL THE  
MORE INTERESTING BY CA SECRETARY ALHAJI GIDADO  
IDRIS' CURIOUS REMARK TO THE PRESS ON JUNE 19  
THAT ONLY UDOMA HAS THE POWER TO RECONVENE THE  
ASSEMBLY. ALHAJI IDRIS EXPLAINED THAT THE SMC  
HAD FULLY ENDOWED UDOMA WITH THE POWER TO CONDUCT  
THE AFFIARS OF THE ASSEMBLY. TO ADD TO THE  
COMPLEXITY, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY OUR SOURCES  
INSIDE THE CA SECRETARIAT THAT UDOMA IS IN A  
HOSPITAL IN LONDON.  
WYMAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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